

Washington speak for tax hikes and it is absurd.

First of all, is there anyone outside of Washington, DC, who really thinks that with 14 million people looking for work in this country, the solution is to raise taxes? The last thing you want to do in the middle of a jobs crisis is raise taxes. Does anyone seriously think that is a good idea? Even the President has said as much. It is just common sense. Remember, the President signed the extension of current tax rates back in December with a similar argument.

But even if we weren't in the middle of a jobs crisis, it would be foolish—and completely dishonest. We are in the middle of a debt crisis right now because we spend too much. The solution is to spend less.

How do we know this?

For 30 years beginning in 1971, Federal spending as a percentage of the economy has averaged around 20.8 percent. But after 2 years of out-of-control spending by the President and his Democrat allies in Congress, government spending is now projected to rise a full 4 percentage points above the historical norm.

That may not sound like a lot, but 4 percent of a \$14 trillion economy is an enormous amount of money. Just as the economy sank, Democrats increased government spending by hundreds of billions of dollars. And now they want to make it permanent. That is the reason we have a deficit like we do.

Government spending has gone up, and a bad economy has caused revenue to go down.

That is the reason the debt has gone up 35 percent since the President took office.

Now Democrats want to use that bad economy as an excuse to lock their spending levels in place. They want to use it as an excuse to raise taxes, which would only make the economy worse, cause us to lose even more jobs, and make it even harder to create new jobs.

So let's just be clear about what is going on here. Right now, Washington is borrowing roughly \$4 billion every day above what it collects in taxes. And Democrats don't want to admit we have a spending problem?

We have a national debt the size of our entire economy and Democrats are wondering whether they want to do anything about the biggest drivers of the debt?

Look: Democrats can continue to argue among themselves about whether to step up and address this crisis they have helped create, but they can't argue about what is causing it or what is needed to address it.

Republicans have been crystal clear about where we stand. And Democrats have also been crystal clear about what's needed for these talks to be a success. It is my hope that they consider their own past statements on entitlement reform as we approach the end of these talks.

The path to success is clear. Let's not let this opportunity to do something go to waste.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Arizona.

LIBYA

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise to join the Senator from Massachusetts, who will shortly submit the product of many hours of bipartisan cooperation and negotiation, an authorization for the limited use of military force in Libya. The resolution, as will be introduced by my colleague from Massachusetts, as I mentioned, would authorize the President to employ the U.S. Armed Forces to advance U.S. national security interests in Libya as part of the international coalition that is enforcing U.N. Security Council resolutions in Libya. It would limit this authority to 1 year, which is more than enough time to finish the job, and it makes clear that the Senate agrees with the President that there is no need and no desire to commit U.S. conventional ground forces in Libya.

I will be the first to admit that this authorization is not perfect and it will not make everyone happy. It does not fully make me happy. I would have preferred that this authorization make clear that our military mission includes the President's stated policy objective of forcing Qadhafi to leave power. I would have preferred that it urge the President to commit more U.S. strike aircraft to the mission in Libya so as to help bring this conflict to a close as soon as possible. And I would have preferred that it call on the President to recognize the Transitional National Council as the legitimate voice of the Libyan people so as to free Qadhafi's frozen assets for the Transitional National Council to use on behalf of the Libyan people. I have called on the administration to do all of these things for some time, and I do so now again.

That said, this authorization has been a bipartisan effort. My Republican colleagues and I have had to make compromises, just as have the Senator from Massachusetts and his Democratic colleagues. I believe the end re-

sult is an authorization that deserves the support of my colleagues in the Senate on both sides of the aisle, and I am confident they will support it.

I know the administration has made it clear that it believes it does not need a congressional authorization such as this because it is their view that U.S. military operations in Libya do not rise to the level of hostility. I believe this assertion will strike most of my colleagues and the Americans they represent as a confusing breach of common sense, and it seems to be undercut by the very report the administration sent to Congress which makes clear that U.S. Armed Forces have been and presumably will continue to fly limited strike missions to suppress enemy air defenses, to operate armed Predator drones that are attacking Qadhafi's forces in an effort to protect Libyan civilians, and to provide the overwhelming support for NATO operations, from intelligence to aerial refueling. Indeed, we read in today's New York Times that since the April 7 date that the administration claims to have ceased hostilities in Libya, U.S. warplanes have struck at Libyan air defenses on 60 occasions and fired about 30 missiles from unmanned drones.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks the article from today's New York Times entitled "Scores of U.S. Strikes in Libya Follow Handoff to Libya."

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. MCCAIN. I certainly agree that actions such as these do not amount to a full-fledged state of war, and I will certainly grant that I am no legal scholar, but I find it hard to swallow that U.S. Armed Forces dropping bombs and killing enemy personnel in a foreign country does not amount to a state of hostilities.

What is worse, this is just the latest way in which this administration has mishandled its responsibility with regard to Congress. The President could have asked to authorize our intervention in Libya months ago, and I believe it could have received a strong, though certainly not unanimous, show of support.

The administration's disregard for the elected representatives of the American people on this matter has been troubling and counterproductive. The unfortunate result of this failure of leadership is plain to see in the full-scale revolt against the administration's Libya policy that is occurring in the House of Representatives. As I speak now, our colleagues in the House are preparing a measure that would cut off all funding for U.S. military operations in Libya, and they plan to vote on it in the coming days.

I know many were opposed to this mission from the beginning, and I respect their convictions. I myself have disagreed and disagreed strongly at